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TRAIL OF THE WHEAT.

THE trail of that 96,000,000 bushels of wheat may well be a bit discouraging to the faint-hearted. The allies demanded it of this country, explaining the urgency in no uncertain terms. Thus this country may face a flour shortage. Yesterday drastic food conservation bills were introduced in both houses of congress. But of the willingness of the American people to stint themselves to help their allies there can be no doubt. We are glad to sacrifice for the cause of the nations leagued against Prussia. But the shadow of those 96,000,000 bushels of wheat in Europe is a darker one. Great Britain has decided to raise about 450,000 more men by conscription. At first thought that may not seem a number great enough to cause our ally any real trouble. But we must remember—conscription being impractical in Ireland—those 450,000 must be "combed out" of the munitions and other trades in which the workers have heretofore been exempt from military service. These long exempted workers have gradually taken it for granted that they were not to be called into the army at any time. Furthermore, away from army discipline, they have had opportunity to listen to the siren song of the red agitator and the pro-German, and yesterday's dispatches seem to prove that at least some factions of British labor have been pretty well innoculated with the "defeatist" propaganda. The ship workers of the Clyde district, we are told officially, last Sunday voted to strike if the new conscription measure is not repealed before the end of January and peace negotiations opened. That the recalcitrants are numerically strong may be inferred from the fact they were not immediately imprisoned for treason, and by the further fact that a large number of the country's leaders believed the "rebuke" given the men should have been "persuasive" rather than threatening. If the strike is called, says the official statement, it is thought it will be of short duration because the men are short of funds. Of course, the men would be forced back to work, but the effect of such tactics indulged in with immunity from prosecution for treason would certainly have anything but a good effect on the balance of Britain's laboring class. It is to be hoped that forceful measures will be taken to discipline the men who would dictate to the government by the use of the strike weapon. France cannot, of course, call any more of her male population to the colors, for the reason that all of them are already fighting. The ships needed to transport 96,000,000 bushels of wheat to Europe must be taken from our total available tonnage, and the transportation of troops must be delayed for a short time; therefore Britain's urgent plea for 450,000 more men so that the west line will have plenty of men pending the arrival of the American army a million strong in the spring of 1919—that being the year the military authorities say we will first be able to take over a considerable part of the fighting front. Thus while there may be some discouragement for the faint-hearted in the situation, the American who has deep, patriotic faith in the ability of his home land to master any difficulty, confidently awaits the day on which the real allied offensive, lead by a million sturdy Americans, starts in the final drive for victory.

THE INDUSTRY OF WAR.

THE war dominates the business and financial situation. The state of the security markets reflects the fact that the war is regarded much more seriously than six months ago. It is inconceivable that Germany can be ultimately victorious over the British empire and the United States, but it is conceivable that the war may drag on for years at a fearful cost, if the people of this country fail to put their full weight into it. Undoubtedly we have the resources to be a decisive factor, but we must bring our resources to bear effectively upon the situation, according to the New York Post.

This means that every workshop in the United States which can be utilized for war work should be promptly given war work to do. The manufacture of non-essentials should cease, in order that labor, shop-room, coal, materials and transportation facilities may be released for war work.

This war is primarily an industrial undertaking. Our effectiveness in it will be measured by the degree in which we give our industrial capacity over to it. If we try to create credit for the government by borrowing at the banks for the purpose of subscribing to the government loans while spending ourselves as usual, we shall increase the demand for labor and materials without increasing the supply, with the result that prices will be forced up higher. In other words, we shall have pure inflation, the purchasing power of the government's income will be correspondingly diminished, and the whole business situation will be weakened and made dangerous.

We cannot give purchasing power to the government and still use it ourselves. We deceive ourselves and defraud the government if we try to do it. Every dollar we pay into the government treasury must be accompanied by a corresponding curtailment of our own purchases.

We can raise any amount of money that the government can spend, if the government's expenditures take the place of our own demands on the workshops, and no amount of new credit that we can create will enable the government to supply its needs, if we go on buying for our private purposes as usual. It will be just the same as trying to finance the war with paper money, which, by the way, a great many people think entirely feasible, because they lose sight of the fact that what is wanting is not facilities for making payments, but facilities for making things.

Every right thinking man is a pacifist, but believes that real peace is worth fighting for.—Cincinnati Times-Star.

"The Fighting Trail"

THIRTEENTH EPISODE—"THE WATER TRAP."

The entrance to the main shaft of the mine was all bustle and hurry. Ore cars were traveling in and out with unusual speed, making up for the time that had been lost. Near the entrance Casey and Nan were talking quietly, enjoying the first relax in days, now that the excitement had died down. Gwyn, with a shift of workmen, was down in the mine. Then with an abruptness that was startling, Nan's voice broke off in the middle of a sentence. There was a rumbling, terrifying sound from within the mine, accompanied by several sharp explosions coming in rapid succession. Both Casey and Nan started in fright. What did this unexpected turn of affairs mean? Was it more of Von Bleck's work? Their minds were working with lightning quickness. Suddenly the signal for the cage to be lowered worked frantically. Casey ran to the donkey-engine and ordered it to be sent down immediately.

* * *

The five minutes which followed, before the cage was lifted, were filled with mental agony and suspense for both Casey and Nan. They were nervously trying to imagine the scene when the men from below, who had given the signal, would reach the surface. And then, wrapped in a little film of smoke, the cage appeared at the top of the shaft. The forms of half a score of staggering, weakened men almost fell forward. Casey and Nan rushed forward to meet them, and saw, lying prone on the floor of the cage, the forms of a dozen unconscious victims of the catastrophe. To these they went and brought them out, one by one, where miners could work over and revive them. As Casey carried the last man out of the shaft, Nan, her eyes wet with tears, cried:

"Gwyn! Where is Gwyn? He didn't came up in the cage!"

"We tried to make him come up," one of those who had been rescued answered, "but he wouldn't. Said he'd stay down and try to save some others. Better send the cage right down again to him."

"What happened?" Casey demanded.

"Big explosion," was the reply. "Tried to wreck the mine, I guess. Most of it was in the old part, where no one was working. The biggest danger's from the smoke. The whole mine is filled with it. That's what got us—the smoke—heavy, black stuff that'd smother you in a second!"

The words seemed to burn Nan's very soul. The thought of her husband imprisoned below in the suffocating smoke terrified her. She rushed to the cage, but it was already descending for another load of humans. Standing beside the spot where the cage was located, Casey and Nan waited many anxious minutes for it to rise again, hoping that Gwyn would be among those in the second load. But, when at last the cage was again hoisted to the surface, Gwyn was not to be seen. Only a mass of huddled men, more dead than alive, emerged. One told Nan that Gwyn had saved the majority of them, and, when the cage had been lifted, he had gone back for more of the imprisoned miners.

"I'm going down!" she screamed to Casey. "He's down there and I'm going to help him. Don't stop me!"

"Don't!" Casey shouted back to her. "Let me go. I can help him more than you can."

But Nan, as he spoke, had already run to the cage and vanished in the smoke that now curled out of the shaft in heavy clouds. Her voice was heard coming from the cage, as Casey rushed forward to check her brave but seemingly futile descent.

"All right! Let me down! Quick!"

The man in charge of the donkey engine which controlled the cage obeyed the order. Hogan's dog, attracted by the sound of Nan's voice, rushed into the smoke, and when Casey reached the shaft, he arrived just in time to see it being lowered, enveloped in smoke, to the bottom of the mine.

The dense, black smoke rolled through the web-work of tunnels that wove and interwove under the ground, until every subterranean passage of the mine seemed filled. To one imprisoned there escape must seem impossible. Even should he escape asphyxiation, the task of finding the way through the black tunnels, lighted only hazily by the burning wood of the shoring, was a practically hopeless one. Yet, for over an hour Gwyn, exhausted almost to insensibility, had staggered along with faltering steps. He had wandered away from the cage and had been unable to return to it. He was lost in the blinding, suffocating curtain of smoke that enveloped him. Now, by an effort that was superhuman and which sapped every ounce of his energy, he braced himself and hurried. He had thought, a moment before, that he had heard Nan's voice calling for help in one of the passages which led off from that in which he was trapped. Floundering along as quickly as his weak legs would permit, and feeling his way with his hands, more than seeing, he reached a turn and halted to listen. The smoke, here, driven on by the draft where the two tunnels met, was less dense. He was able to breathe freer and regain some of the strength which had left him. As Gwyn stood there, wondering which way to proceed and listening attentively to every little sound, with the hope of again hearing Nan's voice, another sound, almost as encouraging, reached his ears. It was a sharp, hollow bark—the bark of Hogan's dog—and it came from the direction of the tunnel in front of Gwyn.

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Without listening further, Gwyn made his way along, guided by the barking of the dog. At length, when the barking grew distinct and closer, Gwyn stopped again. When he resumed his walking, it was to advance slowly and cautiously. It seemed to him now that the dog must be lower, perhaps in one of the galleries or ledges in the same tunnel, but deeper. In another moment, he discovered that this was a fact, for, directly ahead of him he could see the drop which led to the lower gallery. He advanced carefully, making sure of his footing, and peered over the ledge. The smoke, at this point, was well cleared away, and there remained but a thin veil of it. Below, however, it was darker, and Gwyn could not see distinctly. As he looked, the figure of the dog, moving about and clawing at the wall in an attempt to get up to the higher level, could plainly be discerned. And, beside the dog, stretched out on the ground, Gwyn could see, as his eyes became accustomed to the darkness, a human form. It was too dark below for recognition, but the sight filled Gwyn with horror.

Gwyn raised himself to his feet—he had been lying flat on the ground as he was peering over the ledge—and made his way around to a point where the floor of the tunnel sloped more gradually to the lower gallery. Here he went down and reached the dog and the body. As he leaned over to look more closely at the form lying on the ground, he started up in surprise. Instead of the body of Nan, he had found that of Shoestring Drant, lying in a little pool of blood—dead. Gwyn reached down and examined the figure. It was certain that the outlaw had been killed by a fall from the upper gallery; there was no sign of a bullet wound anywhere upon him. Just as Gwyn was about to leave and continue his search, which now seemed beyond all hope, the sign of something clasped tightly in the dead man's hand attracted his attention. He picked it up, and, glancing at it in the light of a smoldering beam, uttered a little cry. It was a bit of cloth which Gwyn recognized as having been torn from Nan's dress. Shoestring, then, must have encountered his wife in the mine! This accounted, also, for the presence of the dog. But what had become of Nan after she and the outlaw had met? Here was the mystery that confronted Gwyn.

Gwyn, accompanied by the animal, made his way rapidly along the tunnel until he reached the little opening in the wall of the mine through which the light had come. It was a small hole, just sufficiently large for him to crawl through, which he did. The refreshing air invigorated him greatly, and he felt a new life throbbing in his veins as he breathed it, after his long imprisonment in the smoke-filled, musty mine. Rising before Gwyn, on a steep incline, was a slope that led to a plateau some fifty feet above. From this plateau, and reaching down to a level with where he stood, dangled a rope, which was apparently attached to a tree above.

"Someone has gone up here before me," Gwyn ruminated. "I don't see how Nan could have done it, either. She must have been pretty much all in after her experience in the mine. However, there's no other way she could have gotten out."

He grasped the rope, tugged at it to make sure that it was secure, and climbed up, hand over hand. At the top, standing on the plateau, Gwyn was able to recognize his surroundings. Now, for the first time in hours, he knew where he was. The entrance to the main shaft, where the other must be waiting, he knew, was not for distant, though it was hidden from view by a heavy growth of trees and shubbery. Behind this screen, Gwyn knew, ran the road which led to the town of Lost Mine.

As he emerged from the woods and approached the edge of the road, he saw Casey rushing madly toward him, shouting and pointing down the road. When Casey caught sight of Gwyn he stopped suddenly.

"Thank God, you're safe," he yelled. "But look! See what's happened to Nan! They've got her, the dirty hounds, and they're making for town as fast as their horses can run. We've got to do something quick. Come on!"

Gwyn followed Casey's finger down the road and beheld, galloping at top speed, the band of Von Bleck. On one of the horses, bound fast so that escape was out of the question, was Nan.

(To Be Continued.)

HE GOT THE SNIPER.

An Incident of the Landing of Our Marines in Vera Cruz.

Uncle Sam's marines know how to handle a rifle; 50 per cent of the force are qualified, listed shots. There is a story about the occupation of Vera Cruz that tells of good shooting and a sure eye. Our bluejackets were marching up the street from the Plaza between rows of low two story houses. A well dressed Mexican gentleman, with a newspaper over his knee, was sitting on the balcony of his house, apparently intent on watching our sailors advance, but hidden under the paper he held a big revolver, and as our men went by he fired. The bullets were striking, but our officers could hardly suspect a well dressed Mexican, reading a paper and looking peacefully on from his own house, of being the sniper.

Dropping his paper, the Mexican went inside to reload. When he came out again on the balcony the glint of the gun caught the attention of Lieutenant Colonel Neville on horseback in the Plaza, a thousand or more yards away. Through his eight power field glass the colonel saw plainly the flash of the shots under the newspaper.

"Get him," he said, turning to his orderly.

The man raised his rifle, pressed the trigger—and the Mexican fell out of his chair.—Henry Reuterdahl in Youth's Companion.

Illiteracy in Spain.

In many villages and small towns in the interior of Spain no one knows how to read or write. There are in Spain 30,000 rural villages without schools of any kind and many thousands which can be reached only by a bridle path, there being no highroads or railway communication of any kind. Attendance at school is voluntary, not obligatory. Seventy-six per cent of the children in Spain are illiterate.